#142
December 2024

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Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series

Hosted by Edward Morin, David Jibson, and Lissa Perrin

Second Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Poetry Workshop. All writers welcome to share and discuss their poetry and short fiction. Sign-up for new participants begins 6:45 p.m.

Fourth Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m.: Featured Reader(s) for 50 minutes. Open Mic reading for 1 hour. All writers welcome to share their own or other favorite poetry. Sign-up begins at 6:45 p.m.

All sessions are virtual and accessible through Zoom.
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December 4 - Sandra Cisneros is a poet, essayist, and fiction writer who explores the lives of working people. Her classic novel, *The House on Mango Street*, celebrates its 40th anniversary. Poetry collections include *Loose Woman* (1995) and *Woman Without Shame* (2022). She has a MacArthur Fellowship and a truckload of other awards.

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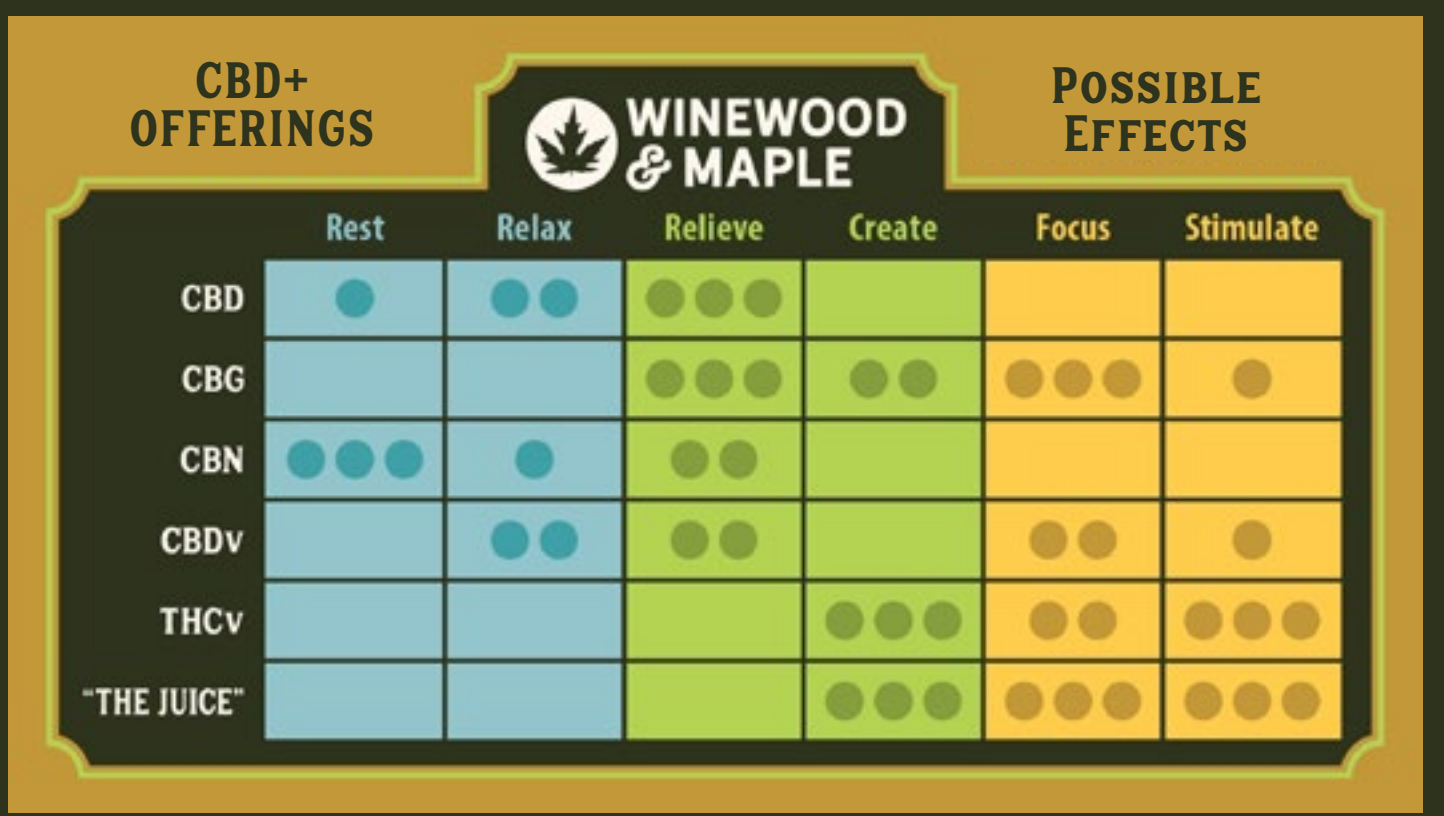

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Born during the pandemic, *The Crazy Wisdom Monthly* seeks to represent the voices of our community in a timely and entertaining manner. We welcome articles, interviews, recipes, wisdom, personal essays, poetry, breathing exercises, beautiful art and photos, favorite places for walks, news of your dogs, or musings on current events. Send your submission to Jennifer@crazywisdom.net.

Word of the Month

Woodnote

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The Crazy Wisdom Community Journal

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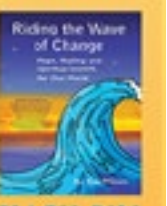

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DARKNESS

By Katherine Munter

"The darker the night, the brighter the stars." -Dostoevsky

I once lived in a tower. It was built over 400 years before my birth and had been used as a convent for centuries before eventually being sold as a residence and rented to college students.

I walked the cobbled streets of the unfamiliar town to an imposing, arched gate. The gate was cracked open, so I cautiously peeked inside, holding the address on a crumpled paper between my fingers.

I was greeted by a man in the courtyard who was wearing a white button down shirt with an ascot tucked tightly against his neck. The man extended his hand, handed me a heavy key, and led me through a narrow door and up an uneven spiral staircase.

As we ascended, the temperature rose, and the air became thick and harder to breathe. At the top, the man opened a door, and heat poured out, as though we were opening a hot oven. "It gets cooler at night," he assured me in French and motioned for me to step inside.

Dark wood beams protruded from white plaster walls. A lonely lightbulb hung delicately from a frayed cord above a small, rough-hewn wood table. A twin bed was tucked beside an imposing armoire, as though it was hiding in the shadows. Across the room, a small window overlooked the courtyard. Beads of sweat gathered on my forehead, and I cracked open the window as the man left, pulling the heavy wood door closed behind him.

Getting to the toilet meant leaving the tower, crossing the courtyard, and descending another spiral staircase into a damp cellar, which also housed a colony of bats. There was no light until you reached the bottom and felt for a pull cord. My towermates and I made a pact that no one would have to go down there alone; we would accompany one another whenever needed.

Every time we descended the cellar stairs, we disturbed the bats. When I was in my tower room, I enjoyed watching them dart about the sky from my tiny window. It was unnerving, however, to descend a cold, dark staircase in anticipation of the sound of dozens of wings flapping wildly in the tight space above my head.

We'd descend slowly, quietly, winding down until suddenly… Woosh! A frenzied patter of skin wings would fly over our heads to the safety of the open sky.

This happened every time, that is, but once. On that night, as we crept further down the spiral stairs, huddled together, the stairwell felt unusually quiet. The darkness enveloped us, dampening our senses, and I slid my hand down the cold plaster walls to keep my footing. As my foot felt for each stair, I anticipated the bats, but they didn't come. My tension released when I realized that we were nearly to the bottom. Step, step… step… silence. "They must not be down here," I thought and turned to my friend. The words never left my lips. Woooosh! Hundreds of wing beats mixed with our exhilarated laughter as we sent the bats swirling up into the night sky.

As the Northern Hemisphere slowly descends toward Winter Solstice and the darkest days of the year, what will you do to welcome a bit more light into your days?

Katherine Munter, owner and clinical director of Creative Life Therapy, an Ann Arbor art therapy practice. www.creativelifetherapy.com

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Sustainable Health

Taking Wellness One Day at a Time

By Julie Kouyate

As a coach in the wellness industry, I am constantly shown the stark truth about what ails most of us humans. We are looking for drastic change, and we want it immediately! We tend to know what it is that we need, but getting there is extremely overwhelming. Rather than suffer from disappointment about not getting "the thing," many people choose to disengage from the goal all together.

As a coach in the wellness industry, I am constantly shown the stark truth about what ails most of us humans. We are looking for drastic change, and we want it immediately!

Small daily improvements are what make us feel as if we are honoring our commitment to ourselves and the health/state of being that we desire. Wellness is an act of doing—that is why the suffix "ness" is behind the word WELL. In my life, I go by a certain set of energetic and physical markers to determine what I will do during my days to feel my best, and then I also have some very simple ritual type practices that I have ingrained into my daily life as well.

I'll begin with the energetic factors. Each day is new and brings about many challenges, opportunities, and fresh new energy. Rigidity to our "programs" of wellness goes against the idea of being well. I love daily exercise, but it doesn't always happen. Instead, I will gently ask what would feel best for my body to do each day. Sometimes the answer is to do a dance workout, go for a walk in the woods, sleep, do planks, swim, do yoga, or any number of things. We really need to follow the energy as it presents itself rather than only do XYZ because that is the "goal." Feeling-oriented goals and asking what feels best for optimal health should be a question we are asking ourselves each day or week.

Next, are physical markers. If we recently had a loss, injury, a bad night of sleep, or a big stressor, then the answer might be to help our nervous system by doing that which regulates the nervous system. It's troublesome to the body, and psyche as a whole, if we pour salt on a wound and hype up our body's arousal system with intensity when all it wishes for is nourishment and soothing. I have witnessed people who soften in healing to go right back to a hardened mindset and think they have to lift heavy things in crossfit, or save the entire world from suffering, only to almost by force, land in bed doing the nurturing that their psyche needed in the first place.

Wellness is an act of doing—that is why the suffix "ness" is behind the word WELL.

Daily habits should be small and feel good to you! I am a somatic healer, and I truly feel the best way toward wellness is being present with our bodies. My small acts of care are always associated with the senses. I love to apply homemade oil to my breasts and face using lymphatic massage with a rigorousness to it. This helps me to love my body, enhance the health of the tissues, and bring healing energy to myself. I also synthesize any new daily rituals with other daily practices to set them into stone.

For example, I created a habit of ingesting my daily microgreens and nutrients with dishwashing! If a new habit is coupled with other no brainer jobs/habits they will become ingrained. That is precisely why I do breast massage right after the shower. Voilá, no more trying to remember: it's as ingrained as brushing my teeth.

As far as more daily wellness habits that make me feel healthy, I use the work week to eat smaller portions, drink Chaga mushroom complex instead of coffee, eat fresh whole foods without sugar or carbohydrates, and go to sleep at an early hour. It is now habitual for me to treat my body gently in this way during my work week in order to serve my clients to my best ability.

We don't have to incorporate healthy tools into our lives so drastically that we can't even sense if they work for us or not.

When the weekend comes, I can loosen my regimen. I enjoy coffee or go out to eat, and perhaps have a dessert. This really works for me too. I feel that I have balance in my sleep and diet patterns. It's so regulating to the hormonal and nervous systems to have that clean energy all week long, and then let that open up for more flexibility to have a little enjoyment on the weekends.

We don't have to incorporate healthy tools into our lives so drastically that we can't even sense if they work for us or not. Oftentimes a slow and calculated approach to incorporating a new wellness regimen is how we ingrain it into our body memory. Everything doesn't have to be fully integrated yesterday. Take your time with things and see what is the best fit based on what feels right. Sometimes we can be so valiant in an effort to "take the supplement," we aren't getting in touch with the fact that it might make us feel sick or is showing us that our bodies don't need, support, or want that particular thing. So let's listen up, check our energy, make exceptions for what's happening in our life, and pair a new habit to one that you have on lock. It works. Happy wellness!

Julie Kouyate is a BodyMind coach and a licensed massage therapist. She lives in Ann Arbor with her husband, Mady Kouyate Griot, daughter and four sons. You can learn more about her offerings, including bodymind coaching, somatic healing sessions, "playshops," retreats, and dance classes with live drumming, at kouyatehealingarts.com, or call (734) 330-7903.

FROM OUR CURRENT ISSUE

Eve Wilson

Midwife for the New World

By Michelle McLemore • Photos by Hilary Nichols

Robert Jordan's fantasy novel *Wheel of Time* describes the "breaking of the world." First published in 1990, it portends a dark, de-evolution—a time of rampant chaos, evil running amuck (worse than the Sanderson sisters). And yet, spiritual communities have sung the emergence of a new positive world for many decades prior.

Certainly, in our history, heavy bonds—literal and figurative—of misunderstanding, anger, fear, pain, manipulation, and isolation have left their energetic impressions across centuries of family lines and continents; yet it is also true, that love, compassion, fortitude, and healing have been wielded by light workers, who humbly mend the woes in the background of all cultures. Dawn is roused by prayers as people greet the sun and four corners; gratitude is whispered to crops and rain for nourishment to endure drought, fire, and plagues; healers step lightly across battle fields—literal and figurative—to spread salve on burns and gashes—wounds physical and psychological—while whispering encouragement, strength, and reminders that the Divine has never left any of us alone.

Our Old World's "breaking" has brought to light untruths which kept people shackled in ideas of isolation from our Divine selves. These ideas no longer serve the health of the planet nor its place in the larger cosmos. A revised world at a higher frequency is dawning, and Eve Wilson, (aptly named) is a forrunner—a herald of new life; she is a soul contract mediator guiding others' evolution to help facilitate the new world ascension. And she believes she will see the New World within her lifetime.

At 64, this Ann Arborite lives at ease in her body, state, and station. Without pomp, she introduces herself as an intuitive spiritual healer and a World Healing and Ascension Worker. "Personal empowerment and soul evolution are the purpose of people's lives, and therefore, of my work." She tilted her head as she added, "I have a knack for perceiving what is behind challenges. That knack allows me to help people who are ready to use their opportunities to grow strong and whole."

While meeting, I observed simple, focused artwork and minimal figurines on the shelves behind her. Wall hangings featured nature elements—various trees,

leaves, and blossoms. The color palette stirred a faint memory of a "somewhere" you could walk barefoot comfortably—at ease within nature without the complicated machinations of physical society.

My gaze was drawn to ask about a particular picture of dark birds hanging over her left shoulder. She delightedly shared it was these special messengers who clarified part of her "Big Job" [purpose] here. "When my daughter was young, we were camping, and the sun was just getting ready to come up. Suddenly, I was awake and could see through the roof of my tent—as if it wasn't there at all. Clearly, I could see crows sitting on the pine trees rising high above the tent… and one spoke."

"I'm going to start cawing," it said.

Eve was surprised and, naturally, intrigued. "Okay," she replied. (For what does one say to such an accommodating crow?)

The crow started cawing, and others called back from across the distance.

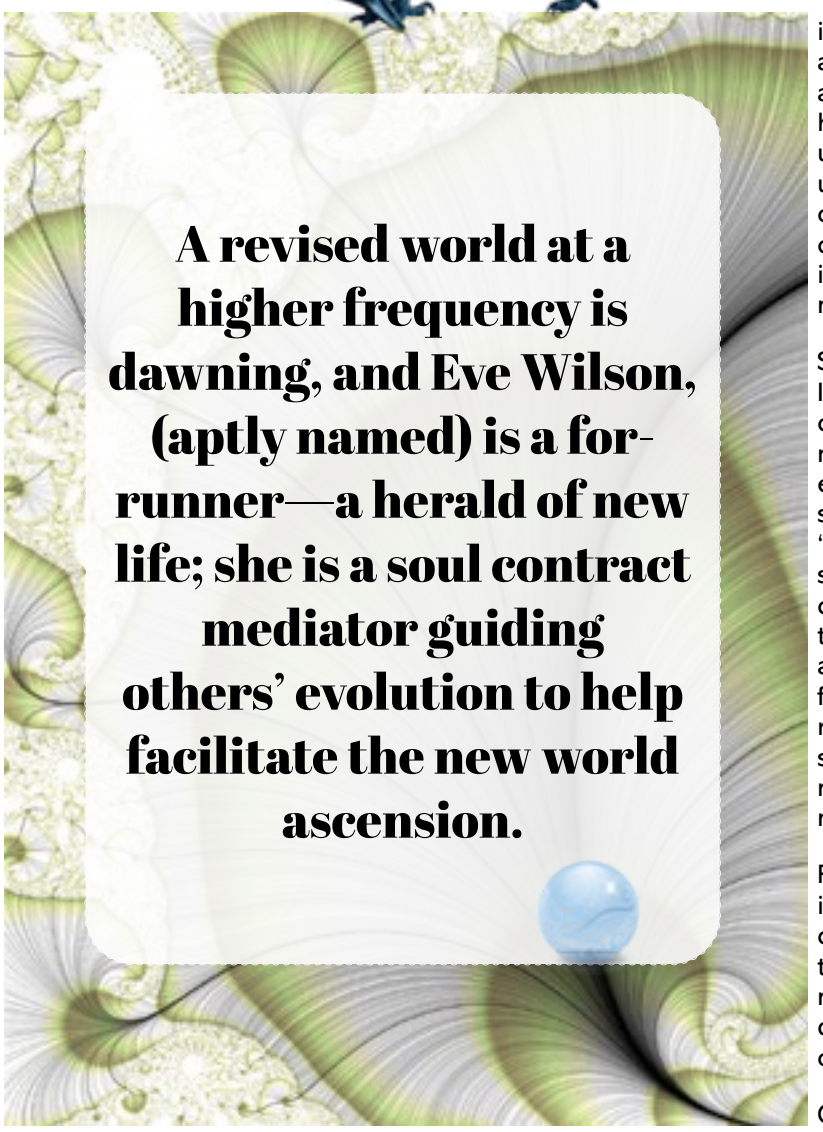
"It was the first time Crow ever talked to me," Eve confided. "It continued, 'Your job is first crow—you carry the message, 'God is Here.' Then, the others will respond to it.'"

Others in this situation might feel a bit daunted: in the dark, on the literal *eve* of dawn, conversing clearly with a bird bestowing Divine assignments. Another camper might question the quality of her prior night's dinner.

Yet, in relating the story, Eve's face glowed, sweetness exuded through her being. Her short, feathered hair framed her face and twinkling eyes; earrings dangled—tinkling to earth-unfathomable music. Eve smiled. "I often initiate and then it/things start showing up."

She continued to explain, "I have the gift of working directly with the One Source. It's what I call the Essence—the Truth of God." Not to be confused with a particular religion's God figure, Wilson explained her role as "being employed by the One" full time since she was 26 years old.

The unique phrasing of employment reveals the casual, intimate, and yet simultaneously respectful relationship she abides in, and with, the One Source since a very young age.



A revised world at a higher frequency is dawning, and Eve Wilson, (aptly named) is a for-runner—a herald of new life; she is a soul contract mediator guiding others' evolution to help facilitate the new world ascension.

One of Wilson's earliest intuitive memories was created circa age four. A grandmother had been asked to babysit her. As the maternal-line matron entered the house, "I saw a black aura radiating from her. It was particulate like charcoal and sharp-edged." Instinct said, "Run!" and that was what she did. "I ran up to my room and pushed everything I could in front of the door. Later when the woman's voice came through the door inquiring what she was doing, Wilson told her, she was playing. With that, Grandma (who was the "angriest and scariest person" the four-year-old had yet met) left her alone. "Looking back," Wilson reflected, "I had learned to recognize seeing people's auras, then to trust to be guided by them."

For Wilson, perception of auras is not confined to people. She can also see the energy of settings and homes (though she doesn't focus on them these days). "I grew up in Beverly Hills, Michigan (between Royal Oak and Birmingham. We had a sweet half-acre yard and lots of trees. It was a lovely home, and I spent most of my time out of doors." Outside was in stark contrast to the pent-up dis-ease inside. Her home's aura? "Soupy, dirty, pea green with specks. Life was scary, stressful, and strange growing up in the family," Wilson confided. To survive she says, "I lived far outside of my body in spirit—that has always been my strong and safe place."

My gaze was drawn to ask about a particular picture of dark birds hanging over her left shoulder. She delightedly shared it was these special messengers who clarified part of her "Big Job" [purpose] here.

"My parents were Pentecostal missionaries who worked in the jail system," she shared. Wilson's mom was a strict religious adherent, influenced personally—and in her parenting style—by the swift judgement and direction of the Old Testament while believing full-hearted in the literal presentation of Jesus in the gospels. This empowered Wilson's mom to stand unyielding in thoughts and actions; it led her to hands-on healings, but also often to venting fury akin to the casting out of the merchants in the Temple square on Sabbath.

Wilson recounts evolution of survival skills despite difficulties such as having to be on constant vigil for unexpected physical and emotional attacks, unfortunately, sometimes by relatives. Today she understands it was part of their scripts—not choices by maleficent beings. Wilson recounted, "I learned from my mother not to believe things just because someone [else] believes them intensely, and [through her works] I learned that spiritual healing is possible."

"The way I was raised taught me to be very independent and not need anything from anyone—to always follow my heart. This allowed me to find my own path yet made it hard to integrate socially. However, it ended up useful," Wilson explained. "Others grow up dependent on others; that dependency often defines or influences the direction they can go in their lives. I'm a free agent—an independent. I can go wherever God needs me."

Still, Wilson's upbeat tone didn't waver. If anything, she grew sassier and more confident. "I have had my heart broken many times—and in fairly catastrophic ways early on. But I am not a victim." Wilson sat, head up, smiling, energy unwavering. "Healing through this journey has made me strong and self-confident. It has taught me compassion for myself and others which, in turn, helped teach me to heal others. It has also taught me that everything is in my life for a purpose. I've learned to embrace that, rather than to complain or resist…much," she giggled. "Oh, and for those who knew me before. This is a good third marriage for me!" She laughed merrily.

Regarding the many challenges stated and implied, Wilson explained: "My Higher Self chose my challenges because they were the quickest way to build the strength and muscles that I needed in my human self to do my bigger work. I am reaping the benefits of that now."

Choosing our own challenges in a soul contract, like volunteering for dodgeball as the scrawniest kid pre-birth, is not a new theory; still, it is definitely not a popular one—taking responsibility and transforming self-patterns flies in the face of current common trends.

Yet, imagine: youthful, glowing spirits raising their hands excitedly in the classroom of the All Consciousness, begging to be chosen for abuse, divorce, slander, loneliness, war, or persecution. "Put me in, Coach! I can do this! I can take it for the team!"

Wilson's difficult relationship with her maternal line was tempered by a father of unconditional love. [A prime example of the energetic balance of challenge and love written into this life's framework.] She shared, "When I was around eight, my father decided to read the *Bible* to my sister and I before bed each night." She went on to describe that during those times, she could see a golden light surrounding him. "It was both healing and inspiring. It taught me about unconditional love." Though Wilson would grow to not identify with any particular religion ("due to the limitations it would impose on who she needs to be in this lifetime") parts of her father's readings resonated as Truth to the child burgeoning into a multi-world walker.

Gratitude and joy vibrated in all directions as she reminisced on "those precious evenings" with her father. I could imagine a dim room, his steady, awed voice measured in reading an often-lyrical script; the kind heart illuminated in Divine light inspiring the young, intently listening Eve.

Wilson's destiny began to take form at fifteen. "I was watching a Merv Griffin talk show about massage. It was like a switch turned on. That evening, I offered to do a massage for my very over-worked father who held so much stress in his body and only gave love on the outside. It changed his life and mine as well." Guided by intuition, she learned hand placement could provide relief, and she would go on to offer it to others professionally for nine years.

Read the rest of the article online!

CW Book Picks *of the month*

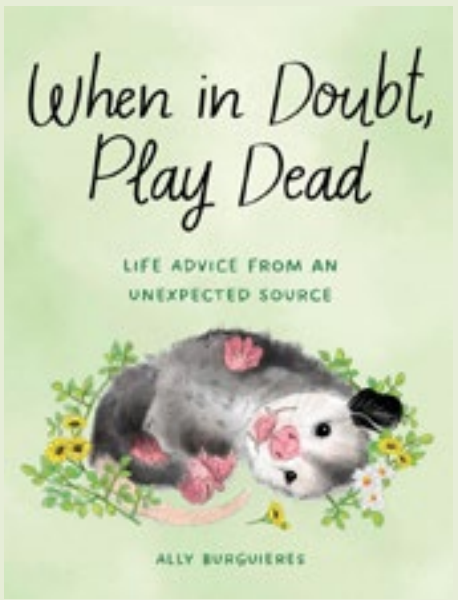
We all know that gratitude is good for us—but the real magic comes when we express it.

Writer Gina Hamadey learned this life-changing lesson firsthand when a case of burnout and too many hours on social media left her feeling depleted and disconnected. In this engaging book, she chronicles how twelve months spent writing 365 thank-you notes to strangers, neighbors, family members, and friends shifted her perspective. Her journey shows that developing a lasting active gratitude practice can make you a happier person, heal complicated relationships, and reconnect you with the people you love--all with just a little bit of bravery at the mailbox.

How can we turn an often-dreaded task into a rewarding act of self-care that makes us feel more present, joyful, and connected? Whether we're writing to a long-lost friend, a helpful neighbor, or a child's teacher, this inspiring book helps us reflect on meaningful memories and shared experiences and express ourselves with authenticity, vulnerability, and heart. Informed by Hamadey's year of discovery as well as interviews with experts on relationships, gratitude, and more, this deceptively simple guide offers a powerful way to jump-start your joy.

Hamadey found herself thanking not only family members and friends, but less expected people in her sphere, including local shopkeepers, physical therapists, long-ago career mentors, favorite authors, and more. Once you get going, you might find yourself cultivating an active gratitude practice, too—one heartfelt note of thanks at a time.

Purchase your copy of *I Want to Thank You* at shopcrazywisdom.com



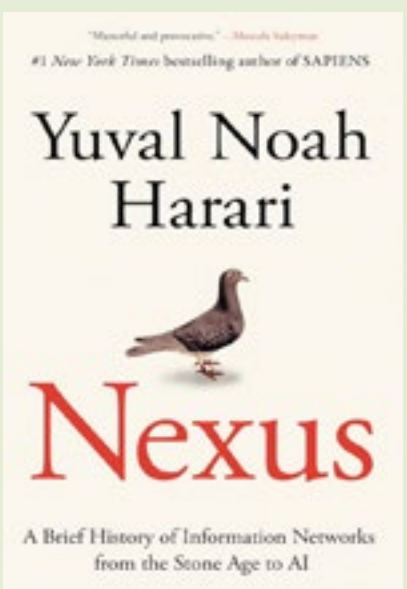
Featuring 70 watercolor illustrations, this totally adorable gift of a book offers wisdom and insight from a delightfully unexpected source: the opossum.

Learn to live your life the opossum way with unique advice like:

The difference between a weed and a flower is often a matter of taste.
It's nobody's business what's in your pouch. Unless you've got snacks in there. In which case, you should share.
A bit of risk is part of life. Cross that street, but ALWAYS look both ways beforehand.
Smile! Unless someone tells you to, in which case you are well within your rights to scream.
And more.

Written and illustrated by Ally Burguieres, creator of the popular Instagram account @ ItsMeSesame, who spends her days as a wildlife rehabber caring for and learning from opossums, When in Doubt, Play Dead offers encouragement to embrace life's weird, wild, and wonderful moments.

Purchase your copy of *When in Doubt, Play Dead* at shopcrazywisdom.com


#1 New York Times bestselling author of SAPIENS
Yuval Noah
Harari
Nexus
A Brief History of Information Networks
from the Stone Age to AI

For the last 100,000 years, we Sapiens have accumulated enormous power. But despite all our discoveries, inventions, and conquests, we now find ourselves in an existential crisis. The world is on the verge of ecological collapse. Misinformation abounds. And we are rushing headlong into the age of AI—a new information network that threatens to annihilate us. For all that we have accomplished, why are we so self-destructive?

Nexus looks through the long lens of human history to consider how the flow of information has shaped us, and our world. Taking us from the Stone Age, through the canonization of the Bible, early modern witch-hunts, Stalinism, Nazism, and the resurgence of populism today, Yuval Noah Harari asks us to consider the complex relationship between information and truth, bureaucracy and mythology, wisdom and power. He explores how different societies and political systems throughout history have wielded information to achieve their goals, for good and ill. And he addresses the urgent choices we face as non-human intelligence threatens our very existence.

Information is not the raw material of truth; neither is it a mere weapon. Nexus explores the hopeful middle ground between these extremes, and in doing so, rediscovers our shared humanity.

Purchase your copy of Nexus at shopcrazywisdom.com

Community Spotlight

By Lynda Gronlund

Corinne Denomme and Alex Crofoot opened Bloodroot Herb Shop on Michigan Avenue in downtown Ypsilanti in the late summer of 2023.

The shop offers over sixty loose leaf organic herbs which can be purchased by the ounce, a selection of herbal extracts, house-made herbal teas, house and garden plants, zines (self-published magazines), and Michigan-made products including skincare items, ceramics and décor, and more. They prioritize sourcing herbs from small American farms. Crofoot and Denomme also teach classes on Western energetic herbalism and offer health consultations. The shop facilitates vendor markets and hosts free community events and other gatherings.

Alex Crofoot and Corinne Denomme

Denomme has been running an herbal product business, White Pine Rising, for over nine years. She has also taught nature connection programs and natural dye workshops. Crofoot is a co-owner of Black Locust Gardens, an organic herb farm in Dexter and the founder of the Community Care Camper which is a free mobile herb clinic serving underserved populations in Ann Arbor and surrounding areas. She is a coordinator for the Great Lakes Herb Faire and a full spectrum doula. Both Crofoot and Denomme have studied herbalism for over a decade and are passionate about making herbalism accessible to everyone regardless of income level.

The pair wanted their shop to be a "stable gathering space" where they can "geek out on plants with others and build resiliency in reciprocal relationships with our community." They wanted a place where they could practice their activism and herbalism, serve the community, and "create jovial experiences within the oppressive structures we live under." They offer sliding scale options and regularly host mutual aid medicine making days where community members create and distribute herbal medicines for unhoused and underserved people in the community.

They had originally thought to set up shop in Ypsilanti's Depot Town, but once they saw the Michigan Avenue space they knew it was the right one, and they are happy to be part of downtown Ypsilanti's business revival. The historic brick building retains its original wood flooring, and Crofoot and Denomme have furnished it with vintage pieces and decorated throughout with dried plants and flowers giving it a cozy feel. They offer upstairs and downstairs space rentals for events, classes, art shows, performances, and whatever else the community may come up with.

Upcoming events at the shop include monthly Death Café meetings with Hanna Hasselschwert, classes on herbalism, botany, basket weaving and crafts, mutual aid community medicine making / distribution days, a Samhain potluck, and an indoor holiday vendor's market in partnership with the shop's neighbor, Ziggy's bar. Dates and times are available online.

BLOODROOT HERB SHOP

Bloodroot Herb Shop is located at 208 W Michigan Avenue, in Ypsilanti MI 48917. The website is bloodrootherbshop.com. The shop can be reached by phone at (734) 802-5408 or by email at bloodrootherbshop.mi@gmail.com.

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Goodbye to a Robin

By Peggy River Singer

Yesterday, my neighbor called me to come and look at an injured robin. It was very weak but could still hold its head up as I wrapped my hands around it to warm it up. I held the bird for a while and talked to it softly. I've helped several birds who've been dazed after flying into my apartment windows; they usually perk up after a few minutes. But this bird was very different.

The beak was discolored, malformed, and the tip was bent. It's possible the bird flew into a window, since my neighbor found it on the ground. The beak's appearance might also be due to a genetic condition. But the most significant clue was a tiny white parasite on the bare skin at the base of the beak. I think it was a bird mite (they feed on a bird's blood or feathers), which would explain the bird's weakness.

After about fifteen minutes it was getting dark, and the bird was barely breathing. My neighbor fixed up a cozy box and settled it on a chair on his covered patio, out of the wind. He called this morning to let me know it passed peacefully during the night. In case you're wondering, past experience told me the bird was already near death when it was found, so I didn't try to rush it to a wildlife rehabber. Instead, I shared love and compassion as its strength and consciousness faded. It was a profound experience.

Robin: I come to you with joy and with thanks for your loving attention as my body and soul worked through the process of separating from each other. Yes, as you suspected, the mites were present in the nest where I hatched this spring, so my body developed poorly and was never as strong as a healthy bird's.

Peggy: Did you choose that life experience?

Robin: Not really, I simply accepted it. I grew and I learned to fly in my own way, I was able to find enough food to keep myself alive. I did not attempt to find a mate, I did not have the energy necessary for courtship or for the exhausting process of raising youngsters. I didn't attract much attention from females because other birds could observe or sense my lack of energy and vibrancy, you see.

Peggy: When you decided not to look for a mate, was that partly because of your parasites? Did you understand that they would have infected a mate and babies?

Robin: Not in the way a human understands that, no. My parents and their parents grew up with parasites, me and the other chicks had parasites, so it was normal to us, you see? A human might say: "Ah, a bird with parasites plus a bird without parasites results in two birds with parasites." We did not make that connection. We just lived our lives as best we could. One of my brothers died very young, my mother picked up his body and tossed it out of the nest, as her instincts directed her to do.

Peggy: May I ask whether your parents are still alive?

Robin: They are not. I am the last of my family, I suppose I was strong enough and fortunate enough in finding food to live this long. You wonder whether I grieve for them, but you are too courteous to ask. Yes, I miss their presence.

Peggy: Are you able to connect with them on the other side?

Robin: Yes, of course. You wonder whether we "blamed" our parents for the mites. Our thoughts are simpler than that, and as I said before, the mites seemed normal to us. We knew we were different from other robins, but that did not distress us the way humans become distressed over differences. To have mites was much like having unexpected colorations, as birds sometimes do. It just WAS, and we got on with our lives.

Peggy: Did you and your siblings spread out into the surrounding area as most young animals do when they reach adulthood?

Robin: Yes, that is one aspect of how the mites are distributed.

Peggy: Thank you, robin. Now, may I speak to a representative of bird mites, please?

Mites: We are here we are honored to be contacted and treated as unique sentient beings. We perceive your intention to avoid considering us to be villains after conversing with that robin, and this is much appreciated.

Peggy: You're welcome. Will you tell us something about your people and your culture?

Mites: What does "culture" mean?

Peggy: A way of living, customs, social arrangements and expectations, that sort of thing.

Mites: Ah. It seems our people live much simpler lives than humans do. Not that we operate purely on instinct, you understand; we are capable of independent thought. But our lives center on our very strong sense of purpose, which is to reproduce.

Peggy: Are your people aware that they can cause great physical harm to birds, and even cause their death like the robin I met?

Mites: We are aware of the decrease in successful and pleasurable feeding when a bird weakens. We are able to decide when it's time to move to a new food source. We feel neither compassion nor guilt about our effect on a bird host, because we are doing what Creator designed us to do. We could not carry out our "assignment" if we possessed human emotions, we would all perish.

Peggy: Do your people communicate with the birds they feed on?

Mites: No.

Peggy: Is there anything else you'd like to say today?

Mites: Appreciation for sharing our point of view.

Peggy River Singer is a Pleiadian Starseed, Lightworker, all-beings communicator, faerie ally, and lifelong writer. More of her articles and channelings are posted on angelsfairiesandlife.wordpress.com. To request a reading, please call 734-548-0194.

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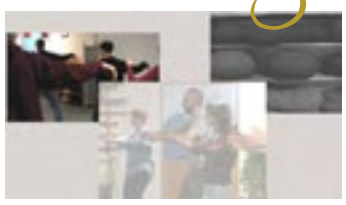

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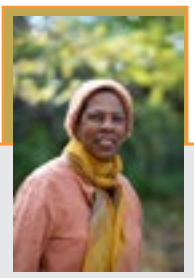

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The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

a free guide to local classes, workshops, and events

December 2024

Calendar edited by Kaili Brooks

Breathwork

Guided Group Breathwork with Jackie Miller • Sunday, December 1 & 15 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • First and third Sundays. A group session of gentle, connected breathing and breath holds with music, guided by Jackie Miller, certified breathwork facilitator. Experience the power of activated breath energy and learn a variety of supportive breathing techniques. FREE, donations welcome. Registration required. For more information visit thisbreath.com.

Buddhism

Meditation sitting with Various Presenters • Sundays • 10 to 11:30 a.m. • Non guided silent meditation followed by sharing or dharma talk. FREE. For more information contact Kenneth at (734) 678-0264.

Jewel Heart Sunday Talks: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Times with Demo Rinpoche • December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. • Join Demo Rinpoche for weekly Sunday morning public talks on a variety of topics that are suitable for newcomers and long-timers alike, followed by a facilitated group discussion based on the morning talk. On the first Sunday of the month, Rinpoche presents the Jataka Tales, stories from the Buddha's previous lives. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Practical Buddhism with Gelek Rimpoche • Tuesday, December 3, 10, 17 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • "Practical Buddhism" offers video recordings of earlier teachings by Gelek Rimpoche as an opportunity for some to revisit and as an introduction for others. A panel discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors follows each session. Discussions are not recorded. The sessions review Gelek Rimpoche's 2012 Sunday talks and into early 2013. Online only. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Meditation Workshop with Khenpo Tshering Chophel • Saturday, December 7, 14, 21,& 28 • 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. • Buddhist monk Khenpo Chophel teaches new meditation techniques, leads meditation, and facilitates discussion about people's meditation practice. FREE; donations welcome. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

Dharma Talk with Khenpo Chophel • Saturday, December 7, 21 • 12 to 1:00 p.m. • Dharma talks cover a wide range of topics in Buddhism, with opportunity for group discussion. A good way to get acquainted with Karuna Buddhist Center and Khenpo Chophel. Topics will be announced closer to each date and can be found on our website and Facebook page. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

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Sunday Celebration with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Sundays through December 29 • 10:45 a.m. to Noon. • Each Sunday, in person and on Zoom, we explore universal truths from all spiritual paths. Donations gratefully accepted. For more information, visit interfaithspirit.org.

Dances of Universal Peace to Celebrate Winter Solstice with Susan Slack • Friday, December 13 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • The Dances of Universal Peace is an interactive, moving meditation practice. Certified leaders share simple chants from Earth's sacred traditions that we sing while moving gently to live music. Joyful, contemplative, and community building. All welcome. $10 suggested donation. For more information contact Susan at peaceinacircle@gmail.com or visit DancesofUniversalPeace.org.

Winter Solstice Lighting of the Fire with Sister Esther Kennedy • Sunday, December 22 • 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. • Calling forth the wisdom of the ancestors. On this darkest night of the year, we listen and give voice to ancestral wisdom held lovingly within darkness and flames of fire. We gather in circle, sing and dance with hearts full of gratitude and love. FREE. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Channeling

Remembering Wholeness, Darshan with Barbara Brodsky & the Mother • Sunday, December 15 • 2 to 5:00 p.m. • The Mother, channeled by Barbara Brodsky offers group and personal messages helping to gently release and reveal places where people are a little bit stuck. They reveal themselves when held deeply with love. Suggested donation: $10-$30-single; $40-$120-all. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Evenings with Aaron with Barbara Brodsky • Wednesday, December 11 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Evenings with Aaron meets once a month. All are welcome. Aaron has met with us regularly since 1989. In this gathering, Aaron often will address a present world issue and how we can best support the resolution of this issue from a place of loving awareness. Suggested donation: $10-$30-single; $30-$90-all. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

Children and Young Adults

Finding Your Mind-Body Rhythm with Robin Lily Goldberg • Monday, December 9 • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • This workshop offers an oasis to adolescents ages 13-18. Through attuning to our thoughts, emotions, sensations, and environments, we'll rediscover our natural rhythms leading to intrinsic sources of support and delight. By embracing these resources, we can release stress, ride the waves of change, and enjoy the journey. $20. For more information contact Robin at robinlily@outlook.com.

Death and Dying

Death Café with Rev. Annie Kopko and Susan Thompson • Tuesday, December 3 • 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. • A discussion group—rather than a grief-support group or counseling session—with no agenda, objectives, or themes. Meets on ZOOM. FREE, donations gratefully accepted. For more information, visit interfaithspirit.org.

Ann Arbor Virtual Death Café with Rachel Briggs • Saturday, December 7 • Join us in-person for conversation about all things related to death and dying. This is not a grief support group, rather a "death positive" event. Participants join in small and large group discussion with deep listening and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. Hosted on ZOOM. For more information contact thedyingyear@gmail.com.

Ypsilanti Death Café with Acacia End of Life Services • Saturday, December 14 • 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. • The objective of Death Cafes is to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives. It's a group-directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives, or themes. It is a discussion group rather than a grief support or counseling session. FREE, donations welcome. For more information visit bloodrootherbshop.com.

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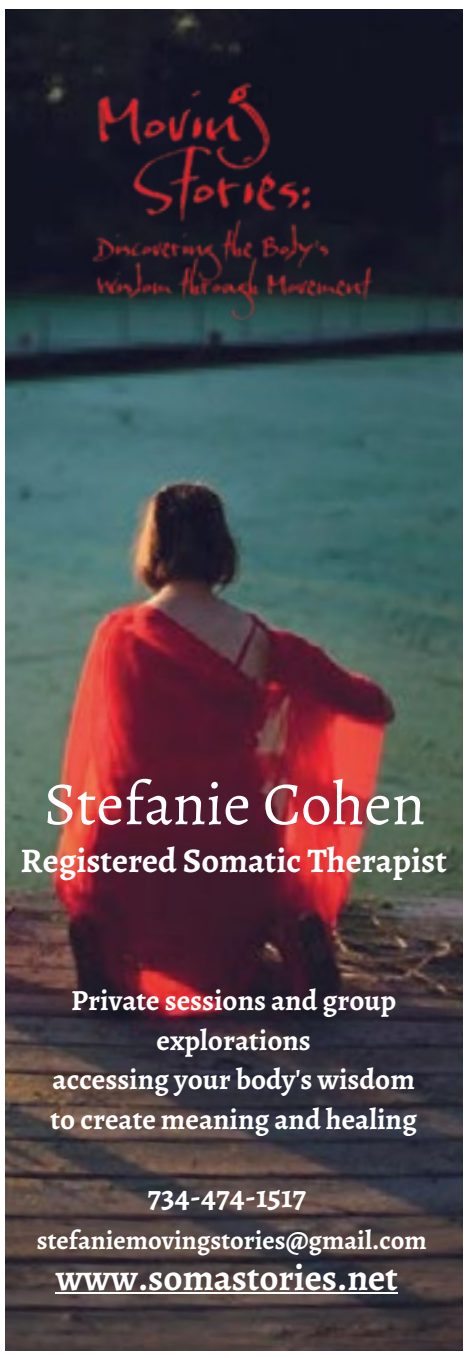

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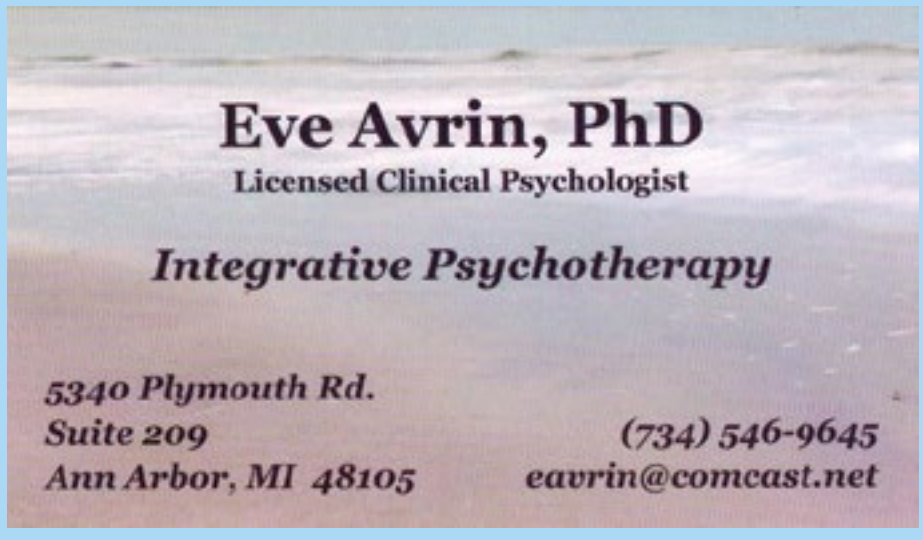

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The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

Death and Dying continued...

Ann Arbor Death Café with Rachel Briggs, Diana Cramer & Merilynne Rush • Saturday, December 21 • 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. • After a 4½ year hiatus, we meet again at Crazy Wisdom on the third Saturday of every month in the Meeting Room! Join us in-person for conversation about all things related to death and dying. This is not a grief support group, rather a "death positive" event. Participants join in small and large group discussion with deep listening and sharing from the heart. No agenda, no presentation. Coffee available; bring your own snack. FREE. For more info visit DeathCafe.com.

Energy and Healing

Imaginary Friend Revival Individual Playshop with Debra Metler • TBD by Client • Imaginary Friend Revival Individual Playshops can help enhance your imagination and creativity. You will attend four, one hour, one on one, interactive Playshops on Google Meet with Debra Metler MSW, CHC. You will explore the concept of the Imaginary Friend and the role that playfulness can have in your daily life. $185 for four one-hour sessions. For more information contact Debra at (248) 819-2131, email debmetler@gmail.com, or visit guffaw.square.site.

Healing & Ascension Monthlies Classes with Rev. Eve Wilson • Thursday, December 5 • 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. • Raise your vibration into unity with your own Higher Self to heal body, mind, soul, and ascend. Learn to live in a new world of unconditional love. Release judgment and fear and discover your true purpose. Available by teleconference call and recorded; supported by skilled world healing ascension workers. $300 for a series of six. For more information contact Eve at (734) 780-7635, email evew@spiritualhealers.com, or visit spiritualhealers.com.

Energy Medicine & Nervous System Balancing with Mary Light • Thursday, December 5 & Friday, December 6 • 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. • Approaches such as Polarity Therapy, Cranial Sacral Balancing, Chiropractic, Marma, and Reflexology have evolved within the bodywork professional for at least 6 decades. This is a hands-on workshop to experience and explore several sessions and their outcomes and benefits. 16 CE. $250. For more information contact Mary at (734) 769-7794, email nshaassociates@gmail.com, or visit naturopathicschoolofannarbor.net.

A Physician's Journey: Yoga and Meditation to Holistic Medicine—Using the idea of the Chakras of Yoga Philosophy as a Medical/Health Model with Dr. Dennis Chernin • Wednesday, December 18 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Dr. Chernin has actively practiced and taught meditation and breathing techniques worldwide for over forty years based upon the ancient teachings of Tantra, Vedanta, and Samkhya philosophies. He is a certified yoga teacher. He is the author of several books, the most recent being *A Physician's Journey: Yoga and Meditation to Holistic Medicine*. He also wrote *How to Meditate Using Chakras, Mantras and Breath* (with audio CD of guided meditation) and *The Complete Homeopathic Resource for Common Illnesses*. For more information contact Bill Zirinsky, billz@crazywisdom.net.

Festivals and Fairs

Enlightened Soul 2-Day Psychic Fair with the Enlightened Soul Center • Saturday & Sunday, December 7, 8 &21, 22 • Saturday Noon to 6:00 p.m., & Sunday Noon to 5:00 p.m.• Join us for a fun-filled day at the Enlightened Soul Center! We have a selection of readers and healers for your enjoyment, along with visiting vendors for shopping! A great way to explore a variety of readings and healings at one time, under one roof: intuitive tarot & oracle card readings, psychic readings, mediums, and spirit art drawings. Prices of readings vary based on type and practitioner. Cost of admission: Saturday $5, Sunday $3. For more information contact Amy Garber, (734) 358-0218, email amy@enlightenedsoulcenter.com, or visit enlightenedsoulcenter.com.

Film

Film & Discussion with Jewel Heart Instructors • Friday, December 13 • 7 to 9:15 p.m. • December 13: The Civilization of Maxwell Bright. 2005. After

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a series of bad relationships, a man orders a mail-order bride and receives more than he bargained for. FREE. Concessions available. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Healing

Healing through Connecting Constellations Workshop with Michaelene Ruhl • Saturday, December 14 • 1 to 6:00 p.m. • In our journey through life, we are intricately connected to everything. Healing through Connecting Constellations (HCC) helps re-establish those connections. Held in a sacred, compassionate space, each HCC experience offers profound healing. It provides a meaningful avenue for reconnection to love, life, and Self. $185 or $165 14 days before. For more information contact Michaelene at michaelene@constellationhealingarts.com or visit constellationhealingarts.com.

Intuitive and Psychic Development

Focused Mind Meditation: Teleconference with John Friedlander • Sunday, December 1 • 9:00 a.m. to Noon • Development of sustained focused meditation makes it easy to develop a whole new magnitude of psychic skill and healing ability, as well as a new level of mental clarity and spiritual openness. See website for phone and payment information. $15. For more information contact Violeta at (734) 476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Psychic Psychology Women's Group: Teleconference with John Friedlander • Tuesday, December 3 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • For women only. Meditations concentrating on women's issues relative to biological energies as well as that of the aura. $10. For more information contact Violeta at (734) 476-1513 or visit psychicpsychology.org.

Meditation

Weekly Silent Meditation with Celeste Zygmont • Ongoing Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to Noon & Tuesdays from 9 to 9:30 a.m. • We will have a brief period of chanting, then mute ourselves, and then begin silent vipassana meditation. After the hour is finished a bell will ring and meditators can go on with their day. There will be time to stay and chat or discuss questions if someone so chooses. Please note this is not a class or a guided meditation. Donation-based. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

White Tara Guided Healing Meditation with Jewel Heart Instructors • December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 • 9:30 to 10:35 a.m. • Tara is the mother goddess of Tibetan Buddhism, known for her quick and compassionate activity. White Tara is particularly associated with healing and long life. These guided meditations use visualization techniques to overcome physical, mental, and emotional suffering. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-338, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Community Sound Bath with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Friday, December 6 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation where he will use singing bowls, our large collection of gongs, and more to create a gentle soundscape perfect for deep relaxation and peace. Yoga mats and one yoga blanket are provided for each attendee. Please bring any additional supports desired. $40, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Healing and Compassion Meditations with Hartmut Sagolla • Monday, December 2, 9, 16. • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Hartmut Sagolla leads a 30–40-minute guided meditation on a Buddhist theme followed by discussion. Meditations are centered around healing oneself and others and developing compassion. They include concentrated meditation, visualization, and contemplative meditations. FREE, donations welcome. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-338, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Sound Bath Meditation with Rob Meyer Kukan and Breathe Yoga • Tuesday, December 31 • 7 to 8:30 p.m. • Relax, unwind, and allow yourself to calm the overworked, overstimulated nervous system, by allowing the healing frequencies of sound to flow through you. Sound Bath Meditation is an immersion in soothing sounds and vibrations that are relaxing and rejuvenating for your body, mind, and spirit. Fridays $28, Tuesday $35. For more information contact Amy at (734) 883-7427, email amy@breatheyogachelsea.com, or visit breatheyogachelsea.com.

Humans: Divine Co-creators in the Cosmos with Barbara Brodsky, Colette Simone, & Spirit Friends • Saturday, December 7 • 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. • This workshop reminds us that we are part of a multidimensional cosmos in which there are many other beings. Consider how we as humans can learn to understand and collaborate with others to bring the gifts of the human to this inter-cosmos collective, embracing the diversity and complexity of form. Suggested donation: single-$30-$110; all three workshops $90-$330. For more information contact Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

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The Crazy Wisdom Calendar

Meditation

Resonant Relaxation (Daytime Sound Bath) with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Thursday, December 12 • 1 to 2:00 p.m. • Are you just plain busy? This hour-long sound bath is for you! Join sound therapist Rob Meyer-Kukan at 7 Notes Natural Health for this daytime sound bath for busy souls. Relax into a zero-gravity chair and float into this time of deep relaxation. $30, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

A Day of Mindfulness: Cultivating Warmth of Heart with Sister Esther Kennedy • Saturday, December 7 • 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. • We can begin by choosing to be present. In silent moments we grow the courage to hear, with the heart-mind, the voice inside us connecting us to all beings and the whole web of life. We humans are at a crossroads and profoundly need one another as we cultivate hearts that are tender, discerning, compassionate, and deeply loving. $35, registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Longest Night Celebration with Rob Meyer-Kukan • Saturday, December 21 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • This event will help us to celebrate the never-ending light within each of us. Seasonal imagery, healing sound (singing bowls, gongs, etc.), releasing ceremony, labyrinth walk, drumming, and more will create a unique and uplifting experience. Yoga mats and yoga blankets will be provided. Please bring any additional supports desired. Sliding Scale $25-40, advanced registration required. For more information contact Rob at (248) 962-5475, email rob@robmeyerkukan.com, or visit 7notesnaturalhealth.com.

Music, Sound, and Voice

Cafe 704 with Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth • Second Saturdays • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Live music in a smoke- and alcohol-free venue, in person or livestream on Zoom. Paul Vornhagen & Aron Kaufman (Nov. 9), and Dorkestra (Dec. 14) $10. For more information visit interfaithspirit.org.

Candlelight Meditation Concert of Sacred Songs & Healing Chants with Norma Gentile • Sunday, December 15 • 4 to 5:30 p.m. • Sacred Songs and medieval Healing Chants sung in full candlelight. Norma creates a colorful harmonic tapestry with singing bowls and audience toning, upon which she sings chants composed nearly a thousand years ago by the seer and saint, Hildegard of Bingen. Suggested donation of $20. For more information contact the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth (734) 327-0270 or visit HealingChants.com.

Pagan Spirituality

Witches Night Out with Moira Payne • Wednesday, December 4 • 6 to 8:00 p.m. • We're excited to announce that Witches' Night Out is back at Crazy Wisdom. Join like-minded individuals to discuss upcoming events, share topics of interest, and answer questions. This is a judgment-free zone, open to everyone! Come to share, listen, learn, and enjoy the gorgeous new space upstairs. FREE. For more information contact Moira at (734) 846-2012 or email mopayne@umich.edu.

Personal Growth

Self-Care Masterclass with Christy DeBurton • Self-Paced • In this compact but powerful self-paced course you'll get at the root causes of your self-sabotaging habits. Learn simple and effective tips and tools to set healthy boundaries without the guilt. Banish burn-out, overwhelm and resentment. Get inspired to eat healthy, sleep well, and live better in your body. $19. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

Nikki Nanos is a Mindfulness & Meditation Teacher/Trainer, coach, and speaker with over 750 hours of mindfulness studies. Her certified Mindfulness Teacher/Training comes from both The School of Positive Transformation and The Dallas Yoga Studio. Nanos's credentials as a Mindfulness Coach are from the Mindful Attentionist Coaching Program (MAC) with her mentor and teacher Mitra Manesh. She has certification in Integrative Coaching from The School of Positive Transformation and Somatic Mindful Coaching from Mindful Coach Method. Nanos lives in Waterford, MI. Learn more about Nanos at nikkinanos.com.

Don't miss her essay from Issue #87, You Are Not Broken. Read it online.

No Judgment Zone with Llama Nancy Burks • Saturday, December 14 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Discussion and sharing group focused on increasing understanding of how our own habits of judging ourselves and others limit our growth. The facilitator will bring a specific topic to each meeting, then participants can share as much as they wish in a supportive environment. FREE. For more information contact Lama Nancy at (734) 649-2127, email lamanancy@karunabuddhistcenter.org, or visit karunabuddhistcenter.org.

Peace

Inner Peace Retreat with Song of the Morning Community & Staff • Saturday through Sunday, December 13, 14, & 15 • Relax into the supportive, collective energy of group meditations, devotional practices, and community meals. Our unique meditative style of hatha yoga is suitable for all levels of experience. Walking trails immerse you in the beauty of nature. Come to unwind, recharge, and reconnect with your inner core of peace. $108, plus lodging. For more information contact Song of the Morning at (989) 983-4107, email office@songofthemorning.org, or visit songofthemorning.org.

Retreats

Personal + Mini Wellness Retreats with Christy DeBurton • Ongoing • When you don't have the time or budget for a full weekend retreat but just need a little 'me-time,' treat yourself to a mini or personal retreat to relax and renew. Visit website for pricing options. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

Advent Blessings, Full of Grace with Miriam Brown • Sunday, December 1 at 6:30 p.m. to Thursday, December 5 at 11:00 a.m. • Advent begins with "Hail, you are full of grace." We move to embrace the truth and call that our souls, personally and collectively magnify the Lord. Let us rejoice in this spaciousness and give our "Yes" to the fullness of life with its joys, pain, complexities, spirit, and hope. May we radiate the blessing of divine life within us. Commuter $180; Double $325; Single $425 registration required. For more information contact the Weber Center at (517) 266-4000, email webercenter@adriandominicans.org, or visit webercenter.org.

Day of Renewal for Helping Professionals with Ariana Wakeman & Emily Adama • Monday, December 7 • 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. • Immersed in nature, you will move through two all-level yoga sessions, guided breath meditation, mindfulness, nature connection practices, and receive a professional massage. Afterwards, enjoy periods of personal and group reflection with others in your field, exploring techniques to prevent burn-out and improve self-care. $160-$280. For more information visit earthwellretreat.com.

Spiritual Development

Sufi Gathering with Imam Kamau Ayubbi • Tuesdays from September 3 to December 31 • 7 to 8:00 p.m. • An evening of discussion and Sufi chanting on Zoom. $5-10 suggested donation. For more information, visit interfaithspirit.org.

That Which is Already Awake is the Path: Awakening to the Joy & Unconditional Love Within with Barbara Brodsky, Aaron & John Orr • Tuesday, December 3, 17 • 6:45 to 9:00 p.m. • The class period will be a mixture of meditation instruction and exploring together: what is this true self we find when we release identification to the outer forms of body, emotions, and thoughts? Suggested donation: $140-$420. For more information contact the Deep Spring Center at (734) 477-5848, email om@deepspring.org, or visit deepspring.org.

How to Live a Soul-directed Life with ECKANKAR • Sunday, December 8 • Noon to 1:00 p.m. • Discover more about yourself as soul, an eternal, creative, spiritual being. Connect with this most sacred part of yourself, receive new insights, and magnify love in your life. All are welcome to this ECK Light and Sound Service which offers you the chance to explore your own direct connection with the Divine. Students of ECKANKAR, The Path of Spiritual Freedom, will share spiritual insights for living authentically and harmoniously. Experience the sacred sound of HU. Located at the Pittsfield Branch Library, 2359 Valley Drive. FREE. For more information, visit eckmi.org.

Tai Chi, Martial Arts, Fitness, and Self Defense

Wu Style Tai Chi Chaun with Marylin Feingold • Sundays, December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 • 4 to 5:00 p.m. • Learn the ancient art of meditation in motion with this "soft style" martial art emphasizing relaxation and balance. Drop-in, $5 per session collected at the door. For more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-338, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Chen Style Tai Chi Chuan with Joe Walters • Ongoing Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays • Times Vary, 1 Hour Maximum • Learn basic training and forms of Chen Style Tai Chi Chuan. FREE. For more information contact Joe at annarbortaichi@gmail.com or visit annarbortaichi.com.

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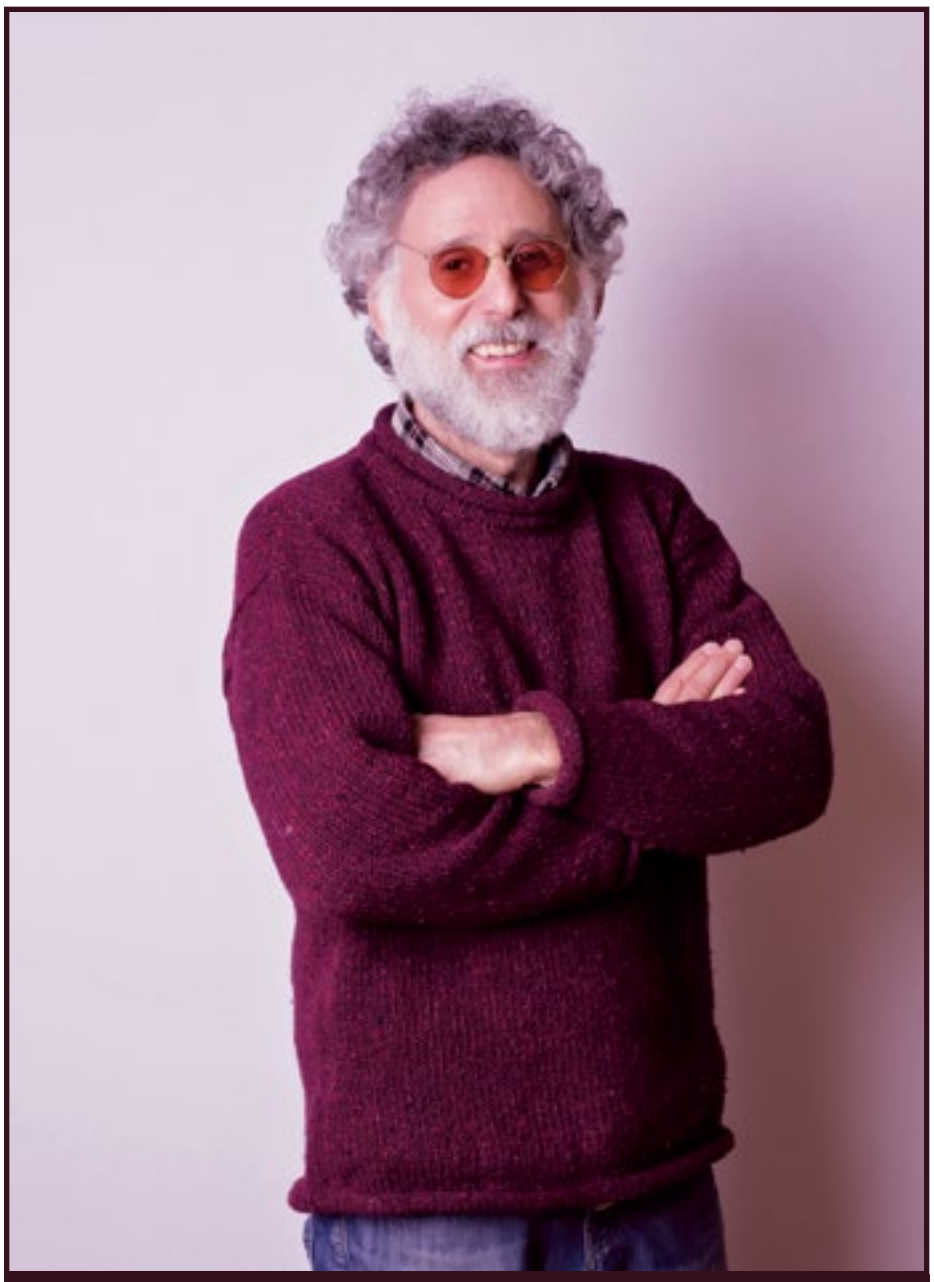

One of the wise men of integrative medicine in this region, Dr. Dennis Chernin (and Dr. Lev Linkner) founded the Parkway Center, the original and pre-eminent clinic for practitioners of complementary, holistic, and integrative medicine in Ann Arbor. Chernin also lectures at U-M Medical School and is the medical director of three county health departments. He's taught meditation and breathing techniques for over 40 years, and he's a certified yoga teacher. And he's the lead singer, harmonium player, and co-founder of Ann Arbor Kirtan. Dr. Chernin is the author of books on meditation and homeopathy, and his most recent book is *A Physician's Journey: Yoga and Meditation to Holistic Medicine*.

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Tarot and Divination

Empathetic Tarot Readings with Leif Laufeyjarsen • See Schedule Below • Hosted at Crazy Wisdom. Walk-ins welcome. Through December 31st. First, second, and third Saturdays, from 1 to 5:00 p.m. Second and third Fridays 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. $3/minute, 15 minute minimum. For more information contact Leif at laufeyjarsen9@gmail.com.

Intuitive Readings with Marcella Fox • See Schedule Below • Hosted at Crazy Wisdom. Last Saturday and Sunday of each month, September through December. Noon to 3:00 p.m. Rates: $20 first 15 min. Additional time $1 per minute. For more information contact Susan at eventsandbookings@crazywisdom.net.

Writing and Poetry

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Series with Edward Morin, David Jibson & Lissa Perrin • Workshops held Wednesday, December 11 • Readings held Wednesday, December 4 • 7 to 9:00 p.m. • Workshop offer space for writers to discuss their work. Featured readers perform for 1-hour, open mic follows. Featured readers: Up-State New Yorkers Judith Kerman and Helen Ruggieri (9/25); Crazy Wisdom Workshop writers Kathlene Barrett, Nicole Birkett, Shutta Crum, David Jibson, Markland Lloyd, Edward Morin, Lissa Perrin (10/23); poet/novelist Sandra Cisneros (12/4). Held virtually on ZOOM. FREE. For more information email cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com, or visit cwcircle.poetry.blog.

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Yoga Your Way with Christy DeBurton • Ongoing• Aqua yoga, Hatha, Vinyasa + Yin Yoga, private sessions, hybrid online courses, retreats and more. Visit website for pricing options. For more information contact Christy at info@christydeburton.com or visit christydeburton.com.

The Practice with Michele Bond • Ongoing Wednesdays • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • Great for athletes or anyone looking for a strong practice. Enjoy increasing core strength, enhancing flexibility, agility, balance, and mental focus with this fun and energetic practice. Students gain so much mind/ body/ spirit wisdom that they return year after year to enjoy this life enhancing practice. $15 if registered for the semester, $20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information contact Michele at (734) 358-8546, email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com, or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

Yoga Essentials with Michele Bond • Ongoing Thursdays • 6 to 7:30 p.m. • For those new to yoga, or new to this system. Learn Universal Principles of Alignment that are an invaluable aid to learning the postures, deepening your understanding of the body, and developing a yoga practice that is safe, joyful, therapeutic, and fun! $15 if registered for the semester, $20 drop in with instructor's permission. For more information contact Michele at (734) 358-8546, email michele@yogahouseannarbor.com, or visit yogahouseannarbor.com.

Hatha Yoga with Samantha Lieberman • December 5, 12, & 19 • 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. • Sam loves the process of creating and offering safe yet challenging yoga sequencing. She enjoys sharing her love of yoga with all levels of students and is deeply honored to pass the gift of yoga to others. Drop-in $15 per session – First visit is free! Cash or more information contact Jewel Heart at (734) 994-3387, email programs@jewelheart.org, or visit jewelheart.org.

Yoga at Tiny Buddha Yoga, voted best in Washtenaw County for Seven Years • Daily classes available • Varying times available • Classes include Hot Vinyasa, Blend Vinyasa, Slow Burn, Ashtanga, Yin Restorative, Slow Flow, and Yinyasa. Teacher Training and individual instruction available. Two Ann Arbor locations. Check out our Mysore and U-M student ambassador programs out online at tinybuddhayoga.com or call (734) 926-5040.

Yoga Classes at Red Yoga, A Hot Yoga Studio • Daily classes available • Varying times available • Classes include Hot Vinyasa, Steel Mace Flow, Yin Yoga, Yin and Yoga Nidra, Community Karma Yoga and more. Teacher training and Private classes available. For more information visit redyogaannarbor.com or call (734) 436-8119.

Yoga at Imagine Fitness and Yoga • Daily classes available • Varying times available • Offering classes in Fundamentals and Beginner Yoga, Vinyasa Levels 1-3, Restorative Yin Yoga, Ashtanga, and Hatha. Heated floors in the yoga studio. We will help you develop the strength, flexibility and balance that are essential for a healthy lifestyle. For more information visit imaginefitnessandyoga.com, call (734) 622-811, or email imagine@imaginefitnessandyoga.com.

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Triple Crane Retreat Center is committed to serving a wide, diverse, and supportive community of spiritual seekers and practitioners from our surrounding communities in Southeast Michigan. It is our goal to cultivate a tranquil environment for personal and group retreats, as well a residential and local commuter classes and programs where spiritual seekers with a desire for authentic spiritual growth can relax, unwind and submerge themselves in spiritual practice.

Residential Retreat and Workshop Space Available for Group and Personal Retreats
TCRC also serves as a retreat place for other like-minded individuals, sincere spiritual seeker and organizations offering workshops and retreats for practitioners of their own. Contact us for more information on available residential retreat space.

Work-Exchange and Volunteers Program
Triple Crane is growing it's work exchange program. We are looking for committed and talented individuals to help co-create a thriving practice community. Visit our work-exchange and volunteer programs website page.

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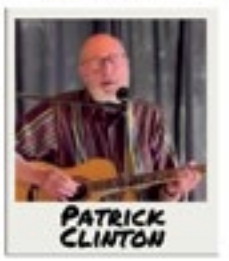

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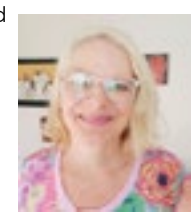

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AN ONGOING EPIDEMIC:
THE DEATH OF DISCUSSION

By Michelle A. McLemore

"War is Peace" is one of the three slogans in 1984'by George Orwell. The antithetical idea has long been utilized by governments around the world. The essence: people unite against a common foreign enemy. However, what to do when no one else in the world will play war? Or if there is no perceivable direct threat to one's country? The next step is to divide within to control the masses. How best to create division? Step 1, create a threat. Step 2, blame a group by using generalities to incite fear. Step 3, discourage rational discussion and critical thinking.

Remember Benjamin from Animal Farm? "Donkeys live a long time" was his mantra because he observed, but kept his mouth shut—neither agreeing nor disagreeing. He kept his head down while the pigs and horses and sheep were stirred up and manipulated. Sheep mindlessly repeated whatever they were taught. Horses worked hard, blindly trusting the leader/owner. The pigs presumed they were superior and manipulated the others first by pretending they believed all were equal and equally abused, then later subjugating the other animals after weakening them emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Which do you identify with the most in the last few years?

For twenty years as a psychology and English teacher, I taught high school students to use a variety of strategies in their writing and speech to get their points across. But more importantly, I guided them to listen, respond, question, ask for clarification, use specific, respectably sourced evidence, and try to put themselves in an opponent's mind to thoroughly understand different viewpoints on the same situation. The goal wasn't simply to persuade someone to their side. It was to dissect the onion—whatever the layered topic the students chose for the week. To ensure—based on the information available at that time—that they could feel justified and confident in their stance. That required playing Devil's advocate and occasionally questioning handed-down family or religious beliefs.

On Fridays we would hold an in-class round table discussion, entirely student-led. No shouting. No name calling. No "because that's just what I believe" answers were allowed. Everyone had to participate at least twice. Sometimes, by the end, students' original positions changed. Sometimes they slid to uncertainty with the need to explore and ponder more. Sometimes they were validated and reinforced. Regardless, students collectively worked toward inviting everyone to the discussion with respect and patience. Occasionally, they had the uncomfortable realization that they were not able to defend a long-held belief or position. They learned that complex situations, sometimes, do not result in complete agreement and they would have to agree to disagree for a while. They learned it was possible to do so without having to break up long-term friendships because truly no one wished harm to anyone else.

Former student Breanna Blankenship shared this memory recently: "That was my favorite part of that class! I always felt like I could speak up and not be judged. I remember myself and another classmate feeling so strongly about our opposing views and I walked out questioning everything because you HAD to listen to everything everyone said."

Another former student, Rylee Clairday, 2024 Miss Washtenaw County, also recalled the experience fondly. Clairday commented, "I believe these discussions helped students consider that common debates are rarely black and white, but rather a gray area that requires critical thinking. I am grateful for these discussions and only wish more people were willing to engage in difficult conversations with the decorum and respect you facilitated in your class." If teenagers can have heart-focused, respectful, difficult discussions, then adults have no excuse.

Consider: have you blocked, snoozed, or unfriended anyone on social media in the last four years? Have you broken off communication with family or long-term friends due to differences in opinions despite them having demonstrated support for you in the past? Have you used name calling when frustrated recently? Or have you been on the receiving end of any such treatment? Then perhaps you could benefit from exploring some listening and discussion strategies.

Psychologist Carl Rogers encouraged a humanistic approach to conflict. He advocated reflective listening to enable understanding and share insights. This required accepting three basic tenets:

1. As humans, both sides, or parties involved are equal in status or position.
2. We should have unconditional positive regard or respect for another's general well-being.
3. It is important to show empathy and understanding to other's struggles and sensitivities. To do so does not mean you agree with how they view life; it means you acknowledge and hold space for their struggles.

Active Listening, also known as Reflective Listening, can be used to…

- Diffuse anger, fear, or feelings of loss of control by helping the speaker vent
- Gain understanding of the speaker's values, motivations, or views
- Help people solve their own problems (and build their self-confidence)
- Acknowledge the worth of an individual (show respect and nurture their self-worth)
- Build relationships (increase trust and empathy)

When a conflict arises with someone you care about, consider asking for a time to talk—a time when neither of you are hungry, tired, or behind on a deadline. A time you can both choose to focus on being present with each other to honor each other for increased understanding. Most of these suggestions can be used for both in-person situations as well as asynchronous communication on social-media.

When you are listening:

- Don't presume that just because someone has a different opinion means they are stupid, mean, unfeeling, or evil.
- Allow wait time. Sometimes the speaker needs to know you'll be patient and wait until he/she is ready to disclose more. Some people think slower and need time to articulate.
- Strive to understand the situation from other's perspective.

- Admit if you get lost or something is unclear. Apologize and ask for more information.
- Actively THINK about effects of what they are describing/remembering/anticipating from their view.
- Paraphrase what you are hearing to help the person focus and clarify his/her own thoughts. Example, "So you are saying, '….?'"
- Help the speaker focus on identifying his/her/their feelings, beliefs, values, and rationale. This may help them identify where they have incongruity or illogical ideas.
- Be empathetic when you can. "That must feel X,Y, or Z." (This helps the speaker clarify or revise their thinking and for you both to understand the driving emotions.)
- Trust that growth can come out of the speaker working through the thought process.
- Practice a pause before reacting to someone's position that differs from yours.
- Ask what examples, sources, or reasons someone believes as they do.
- Don't use sarcasm or make jokes to lighten the mood. That can make the other person feel you are dismissing their feelings or concerns.
- Don't smother a concern by saying, "It's not that big of a deal. It'll all get better" or "The chances are minimal." This demeans the person's feelings. To him/her/them, it is a significant concern. In your response/sharing time, you can share what statistics or facts you have read/heard to help decrease panic about potentiality of situations.
- Don't interrupt.
- Don't reflect with questions that may be answered with a yes or a no. Keep your reflections open-ended as much as possible.

If you feel something said is a non-sequitur, red herring, circular reasoning, or avoiding a question, go slow. Don't attack. Remember many people are products of years of poor discussion examples in dysfunctional families, gas-lighting personal relationships, power-hungry business situations, and lack of self-worth. Consider your parents' conflict-resolution styles. Were they healthy and effective? Are you emulating them when you feel attacked, cornered, or perceive you are "losing" a discussion?

When you are sharing your position…

- Be concise in your position on the current issue; Don't bring up an entire history of perceived faults or wrongs.
- Acknowledge any part of the conflict you are responsible for or have been a party to.
- Be honest and realistic about the minimum you need for resolution and moving forward.

- Don't shout, name-call, exaggerate, or use generalizations. (If writing, avoid bold-font and exclamation marks.) Those almost always guarantee that the other person will stop listening to you and any valid rationale you might've shared.
- Don't lead with judgement. You might antagonize the person if he/she isn't ready to accept ownership of the problem. Instead of saying, "You're a control-freak," focus on a specific, tangible behavior you'd like modified. "As I do most of the cooking and clean up, help me understand why it causes you stress that I put the dishes away where, and how, I want to."
- Don't criticize or attack personally.
- Don't talk down to the speaker as if you are smarter, wiser, or more experienced. Your amount of experience seems irrelevant when someone else is working through emotions.
- Try to explain your thought in a variety of ways for different types of learners. (i.e. metaphors, imagery, similes, statistics, facts, cause & effects, real life examples, and realistic hypothetical situations)
- Avoid the words always and never.
- Can you make a concession? Is any part of an opponent's argument logical or concerning? Acknowledge it. Then, what is an angle, however, that they may have missed regarding that area?
- Acknowledge when you have a thought which is emotional (especially fear-based) instead of evidence-based. You can make concessions regarding your own arguments. It doesn't weaken or invalidate your feelings. It maturely acknowledges something that is influencing you.

If at any point in a discussion, or friendly debate, you feel overwhelmed, ask the other person for a time-out to process the information exchanged. Being overwhelmed can cause people to regress to defense-mode. That's when the psyche tries to quickly bring things to an end for emotional survival and things that don't advance a discussion occur—things like name calling, exaggerations, bringing up past misunderstandings or hurts. Basically, throwing everything in the kitchen (sometimes including the kitchen sink) at your opponent which stops the two-way conversation, sometimes permanently.

It is human nature to defend oneself when feeling countered. However, just because someone doesn't agree with you, doesn't mean you are being attacked. Likewise, just because you don't like what someone says, does not mean they actually insulted you.

Inferring an insult where one wasn't stated has ruined many relationships since Covid and during the last three presidential terms. If you follow up an imagined insult with abrupt ghosting or refusal to talk things out, then you are using misplaced indignance to cover up fictionalizing other people's motivation. It isn't healthy, nor useful, in the long run. Life is truly fleeting. And we can be enriched through the talents and views of diverse friends, family, and community.

Growing up, and growing wiser, should be about evaluating our thoughts and beliefs and revising them when new information is learned. No one should have to become "Benjamins" because friends, co-workers, or family is aggressively slanderous, shouts others down into submission, or shames anyone who disagrees with them. Silence is not agreement. Silence, sometimes, is caused when you believe the other person is not open to hear or consider another point of view. And when we no longer work to listen and discuss respectfully, it makes us all losers in this war for humanity, equality, equity, and the common good.

Michelle McLemore is a freelance writer, energy practitioner, and stress management guide. Her background as a psychology and writing teacher supports personalizing client self-care to boost balance and vitality. She hosts workshops a few times a year. Learn more at michellemclemore.com or facebook.com/MichelleMcLemoreHealingGuide. Contact her at energy@michellemclemore.com.

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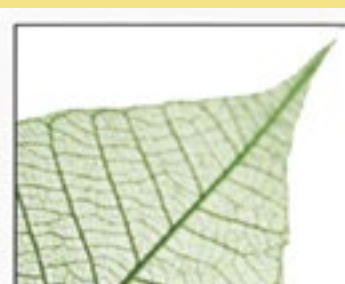

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-Oren Arnold